



# Optional Methods & Competing Values

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Mayor and Council  
City of Rockville, MD  
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# Optional Methods

## Part I: Background Information

Purpose  
Existing Options  
Alternatives  
Recommendation

There are two separate issues to address regarding special development procedures:

1. Procedural revisions (first part of tonight's presentation – OM)
2. Identifying and regulating for the policy trade-offs when reviewing a special development (second part of presentation, CV) – for examples cities must balance different goals (for example, allowing increased density to fund additional cultural amenities). Goal of these papers is to discuss these concerns, and to determine how to address them in the regulations.
  - Like UD presentation last week, these next two presentations were created to provide the M&C with background information only. Follow-up meeting on OM on Nov. 21 to discuss the particular recommendations of staff; and a follow-up meeting on CV on Oct 17 (along with UD)
  - Optional Methods – a.k.a. Special Development Procedures details the options currently available to the city, few alternatives which may be applicable to the ZO revision, and Staff's initial recommendations.

Think broad with regard to optional method changes. We're talking about changing the language of what you know as OM (new terms/new framework) b/c what exists is confusing and complicated. We're not dealing only with downtown commercial development, but exploring all options available in the City. Work to make them more consistent and understandable. Will still have gradations depending on district / intensity but what will be incorporated in the revision will likely be different from what we have now.

# Purpose of Development Options

- ❖ Promote Livability
- ❖ Provide options to reduce demands
- ❖ Encourage creativity
- ❖ Cohesive environment
- ❖ Variety opportunities



All SPD same purpose – to promote livability. Purpose is to provide Residential and Commercial clustering options to reduce demands on municipal services, such as transportation and utilities

Allow creative new development to produce a cohesive neighborhood environment with a variety of housing and commercial opportunities

Cities benefit

- Improve site layout,
- Protect natural features (topo / scenery) and environmental values
- Variety of opportunities – attract businesses and residents alike;

Developers benefit

- Streamlined process
- Produce kinds of developments that market desires
- If meet large scale goals of the city, no need to confine to details of zoning code
- No need to establish practical difficulty from each variance from underlying zoning requirements

## Existing Options

- ❖ Variable Lot Size
- ❖ Cluster
- ❖ Planned Residential Unit
- ❖ Residential Townhouse
- ❖ Comprehensive Planned Development
- ❖ I-3 Optional Method



Example Cluster Development

Options voluntary to the developer in the zones in which they are allowed (i.e. “optional”)

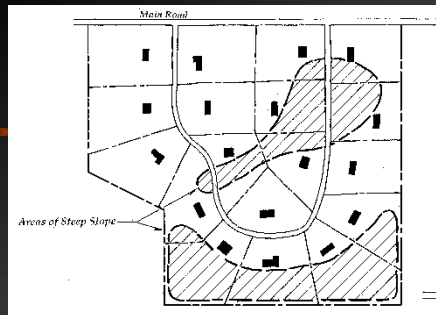
Approval is in form of special exception (potential particular conditions); and site specific

Chart in back of presentation explaining the particulars of each.

Certain overarching limitations

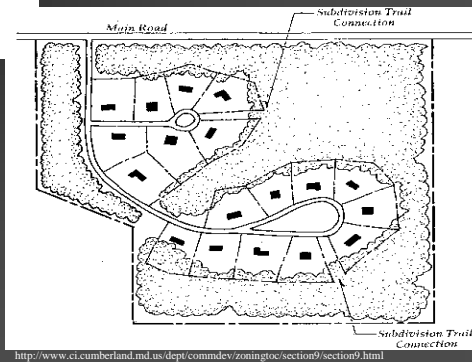
- Only in certain zones; though CPD and I-3 most limited
- Size – most minimum of 5 acres; RTH min: 40,000 sq ft in TC; max 10 ac outside TC; exception of small tract employment projects CPD and I-3 OM must be min 40 acres
- Approving body – PC for Variable lot size and Cluster, M&C for RTH, PDP for I-3, both different stages for CPD and I-3
- PRU, RTH, CPD, I-3 design requirements (parking, landscaping, signage) all may not be waived but may be modified subject to certain limitations.

Examples in the City: PRU – Rockshire / Thirty Oaks; RTH – Cambridge; CPD – King Farm, Fallsgrove; I-3 – Upper Rock



Typical Subdivision

## Cluster Development



Cluster development not only special development option that allows for clustering. These pictures show the difference between typical subdivision and cluster development. They both have the same number of parcels, but you can see the difference. In the typical subdivision, the entire parcel is divided up among the lots with no community space. In the cluster development, the developer is allowed to work around the natural features (steep slope) to preserve communal open space which is better for the environment.

# Floating Zones

- ❖ Accommodate desired development
- ❖ Flexibility
- ❖ “Floats”
- ❖ Neighbor protections
- ❖ Promote City policy
- ❖ Same regulations as conventional zone



Next few slides will address alternatives, not already existing in the city's zoning code. The first is form based zoning, used when a community wants to encourage to accommodate new development (discussed in UD).

MD used for different things – Montgomery County 1) development plan review zones and 2) non-development plan review zones;

Same as conventional zone in content – setbacks, height, uses

Not mapped until application for it approved. It floats until it is brought down to earth.

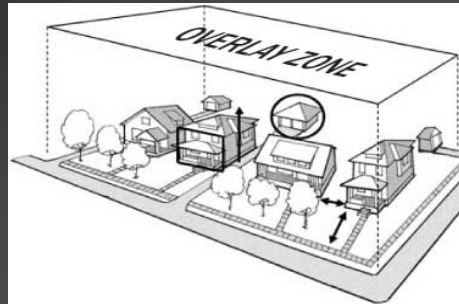
Wishes to permit a specific number of uses but not necessarily everywhere – upon approval parcel is rezoned and becomes a small zoning district.

Example: A city may have an anti-industry policy but may consider few low-impact developments under certain conditions; allow this type of control and flexibility.

Often more intensive use than initial zoning – need to mitigate its impact through buffers.

# Overlay Zones

- ❖ Special public interest
- ❖ Protect character
- ❖ Mapped
- ❖ Infill overlay



[http://www.preservationdallas.org/new\\_site/images/GR\\_overlayZone.jpg](http://www.preservationdallas.org/new_site/images/GR_overlayZone.jpg)

Second alternative is overlay zoning. This is ideal where there is special public interest that does not coincide with traditional zoning. It is often used to protect specific resources that are subject to development pressure.

Instead of new zone – this superimposed on traditional areas; existing zoning remains the same but section or sections must meet these additional standards – can be small (in one zone alone) or large (traverse through a number of different zones like a greenway protection overlay).

These, unlike Floating zone, are mapped – boundaries determined by criteria.

Could be optional or mandatory standards associated with this zoning; optional include incentives to encourage use of optional standards – parking, height, density requirements may be reduced in return for public land dedication or the application of architectural standards.

Mandatory requirements - must reach consensus before apply regulations to ensure that changes are applicable to the particular area and will be accepted.

Infill overlay – applicable where main character of existing code can be maintained; particular sectors where intense growth is desired or likely to occur will regulate new development through special infill requirements.

# Traditional Neighborhood Development

- ❖ Variety housing / land uses
- ❖ Variety transportation options
- ❖ Public / private space
- ❖ Network



Vermillion TND, North Carolina

Third alternative is a TND – This includes a variety of housing types and land uses within a defined area; emulates town and suburbs built in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century more than the auto-dominated suburbs of the 60's and beyond. The last 50 years have stressed a separation of uses and great emphasis on the car while the TND stresses walkable scale, integration of different housing types, and commercial uses and building of true town centers with civic uses.

Known for an interconnecting street network, town center, formal civic spaces and square, and pedestrian oriented design that pushes garages to rear and parking behind buildings

Inclusion of civic buildings / civic spaces – in form of plazas, greens, parks, squares enhance community identity and value – served by network of paths, streets suitable for peds and vehicles – provide option of walking / biking or driving

UD paper talked about new urbanist design regs to incorp in TND zoning



## Existing Zones with Modifications

- ❖ Maintain Euclidian zones
- ❖ Optional procedures
- ❖ Streamline
- ❖ Reorganize



Final alt is to maintain the existing Euclidian structure of code (I.e. “build a better mousetrap”). This could be applied for all or only number of zones, and may include tweaking current optional procedures.

On example of this “tweak” is to incorporate a 2004, staff recommendation of TC revisions to optional method of development (TC-3 and TC-4 zones) as recommended in TC Neighborhood Plan. Other amendments been made in accord with the TC Plan, however, the Optional Method amendment was excluded for discussion in comprehensive revision (includes increase FAR to 4.0 in certain areas, exclude retail ground floor area from FAR lmt; measure height starting at second floor or 16 ft above street, whichever is lower)

In terms of pedestrian accessibility current Optional Methods procedures is only a starting point. The ordinance requires all development provide system of public pedestrian ways linking development with neighboring properties and Metro. Need more guidelines on streetscape to encourage use of the walkways to promote urban design goal of livability.

Other options which will need to be done if this option is chosen – streamline and reorganize. Even if kept them separate better ways to present the information so average person can understand

## Staff Recommendations

- ❖ All same goal:
  - ❖ flexibility, and
  - ❖ quality livable environment
- ❖ Want to encourage use of these
- ❖ Recommend some automatic approval



**Sum up** – There are 3 options to include in revision: 1) maintain existing development options, unchanged but reorganized; 2) modify the existing methods to meet evolving needs of City or 3) add alternatives that are new to the City. Really, there is a forth option – to combine these.

Staff reviewed these alts and recommend combo last two – consolidate and add new 6 different but all same interest – provide flexibility and quality of livable environment (but intensity and requirements differ).

Encourage use – minimum acreage required may hinder future special developments (hard to assemble that size lot together);

Automatic – current methods not truly “optional” as they require multiple layers of negotiation for approval – few guarantees can hinder their use; if City desires redevelopment, some processes should be easier.

# Staff Recommendations

- ❖ Three Tier System
  - ❖ Standard Optional Method
  - ❖ Floating Zones
  - ❖ Planned Development Option
- ❖ Future Discussions
  - ❖ Density
  - ❖ Location
  - ❖ Added Amenities



Terms may change as the revision process continues – details in the drafting but these are the initial recommendations:

**Standard Optional Method** – Allow no discretion in approval – if developer meets X requirements, they can have Y development rights. Set standards will be provided to ensure that the development will meet the goals of the procedure

**Floating** – small number include – developer must undergo the process for approval similar to rezoning but after zone in place, partic reg applicable are determined, the developer must only meet those specific requirements and nec permit approvals – may include TND floating zone

**Planned Development Option** – current options in the existing zoning code could be consolidated into 1 process – applied to large-scale developments, negotiations on case-by-case basis

More particular recommendations in November – after follow-up on UD & CV

Recommend discussing 1) density – may be different for each tier; bonuses; maximum instead of minimum; 2) Location – certain tiers more applicable in different areas of the city; 3) Added amenities – like to include requirement for developers to provide added amenities w/ approval of special development option – include public parks, sidewalks, ped paths, other things to promote goal of “livability”

# Conclusion



Conclusion – Provide design options – which promote the goals and promotion of creative neighborhoods. Staff has recommended a three-tier hierarchy of proposed options. This is different from what we know.

There are a number of competing values associated with a comp zoning revision – process will be collaborative one – cooperation of different staff departments – these various white paper discussions will create a final doc that incorp and balances competing interests – M&C will continue to provide their guidance to direct staff in their recommendations

Tonight, Mayor and Council can answer a number of questions that will give staff general guidance as staff goes forward with particular recommendations.